

REMARKS

This amendment responds to the Office Action mailed January 30, 2004.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for recognizing in paragraph 5 of the Office Action that claims 8-14 are allowable.

In paragraphs 1-2 of the Office Action, claims 1, 4, and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,632,252 to Haruki et al. (Haruki). The Examiner's rejection on this ground is respectfully traversed.

Among the limitations of claim 1 which are neither disclosed nor suggested in the art of record is the requirement that the display "indicates a number of unprocessed mail items received and assigned to said postal information input apparatus." Haruki discloses that the coding device's display indicates the unrecognized address image. Haruki does not disclose that the display indicates the number of unprocessed items which have been received and held for operator input. In the absence of any disclosure or suggestion of this feature of the invention, claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 1 has been amended to improve the idiomatic use of English. These amendments do not narrow the scope of the claim. It should be noted that the terms "display device" and "display" are structural elements which provide a visual indication, and therefore the claim as originally written did not invoke 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 6. See, e.g., Cole v. Kimberly-Clark Corp., 102 F.3d 524, 531, 41 USPQ2d 1001, 1006 (Fed. Cir. 1996) (holding "perforation means . . . for tearing" does not invoke 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 6 because the claim describes the structure supporting the tearing function (i.e., perforation)).

Claims 4 and 6 depend from claim 1 and include all of the limitations found therein. These claims include further limitations which, in combination with the limitations of claim 1, are neither disclosed nor suggested in the art of record. By way of example, claim 4 requires that the first display is an icon display, which indicates that data has been received from the postal matter sorting machine that requires operator attention. Claim 6 requires that a display deletion means removes the processed item from the display when the operator enters the data within a predetermined time. These features are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record.

In paragraphs 3-4 of the Office Action, claims 2, 3, 5, and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over Haruki in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,632,252 to Hiramatsu et al. (Hiramatsu). The Examiner's rejection on this ground is respectfully traversed.

Among the limitations of claim 2 which are neither disclosed nor suggested in the art of record is the requirement for "a second display which indicates that if said data to be input cannot be input within a predetermined time, said predetermined time has passed." The cited portions of Haruki refer to a first and second embodiment. In the first embodiment, Haruki discloses an automatic function of the sortation machine, which compares the recognizer read data time with the present time to see if the mail item has not yet passed through the waiting path of the machine. In the second embodiment, the earliest read time for each rejected data mail item in each sortation machine is stored in a table so that rejected data having the earliest read times may be assigned to coding devices by a distributor. If there are no rejected data mail items left in a sortation machine, a predetermined time larger than any possible actual time is written into the table, to preserve this read time-ordered selection of rejected data mail items. Neither of these embodiments are related to the time provided to the coding device operator to supply information related to the unrecognized data.

Hiramatsu fails to cure this deficiency. The cited portion of Hiramatsu discloses "a video coding system which allows the operator to perform a coding operation efficiently and tirelessly within a short period of time" (col. 1, l. 50-52), but the display does not provide an indication that the operator has not provided such input within a predetermined period of time. In the absence of any disclosure or suggestion of this feature of the invention, claim 2 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 3 and 5 depend from claim 2 and include all of the limitations found therein, and are also allowable for at least the same reason stated in connection with claim 2. These claims include further limitations which, in combination with the limitations of claim 2, are neither disclosed nor suggested in the art of record. By way of example, claim 3 requires that the second display is displayed within a display area of the first display. Claim 5 requires that the second display is a display state in which the first display has changed from a first display state to a second display state. This is not disclosed or suggested in the art of record.

Claim 7 has been amended to make it clear that this claim is directed toward display of a number of unprocessed mail items received and assigned to the input apparatus. In this connection, the explicit recitation of "mail items received and assigned" is merely explicitly stating that which was inherent in the original claim. Claim 2 has been amended to place it in independent form and to eliminate this similar limitation found in claim 1.

Claims 2, and 7-12 have been amended to improve the idiomatic use of English by replacing first and second "display means" with "display," thus clarifying that these limitations are not intended to invoke 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 6. This amendment does not change the scope of these claims because the term "display" imparts the structure for display of a visual element or indication, and therefore the claims as originally written did not invoke 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 6. The scope of these amended claims are not believed to have been narrowed, and the scope of claim 2 is believed to be broadened.

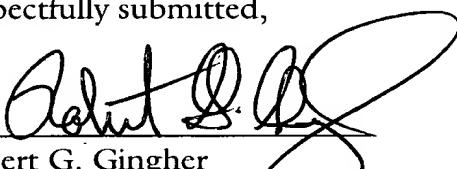
Claim 6 has been amended to correct an antecedent basis error, eliminating recitation of "said second display," which is not present in claim 1. Claim 11 has been amended to correct a typographical error, replacing a period prematurely placed in the claim with ", and."

Claims 15-24 have been added to more fully claim the invention.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

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Respectfully submitted,

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